

225th Anniversary Celebration

First United Methodist Church Shinnston

October 9, 2011



A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNAL TO HELP TELL THE STORY

Ginnie & Dewayne Lowther, Visual Journalists



First United Methodist Church - Shinnston, West Virginia 225th Anniversary Celebration – October 9, 2011

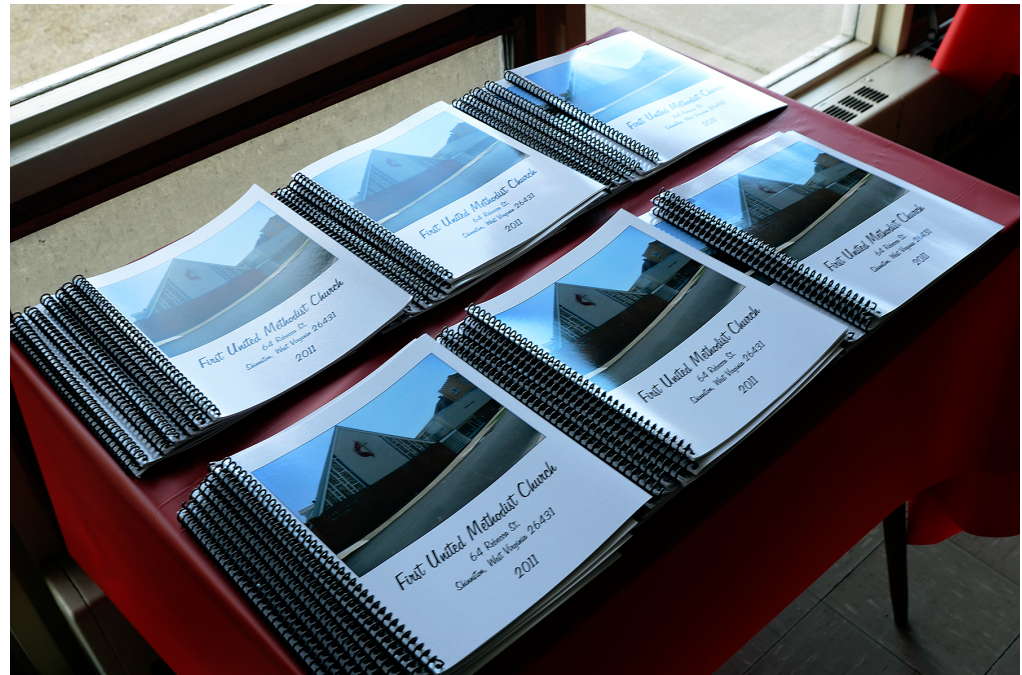


Visual Journaling to help tell the story!

Dewayne & Ginnie Lowther have used photography as a tool for ministry since 1950. Both are now retired clergy members of the West Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and utilize digital technology to continue their life time enthusiasm for Visual Journaling and exhibiting images that document and affirm ministries of the Church, liturgical and other performing and visual arts, individuals, families, community organizations and beauty in the world.

Both are members of the West Virginia Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History where Ginnie serves as chairperson and they accept invitations to Photojournal Anniversary Observances by local congregations. Copies of this book are being donated by the Lowthers to First United Methodist Shinnston Congregation & to the Annual Conference Archives at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon.

































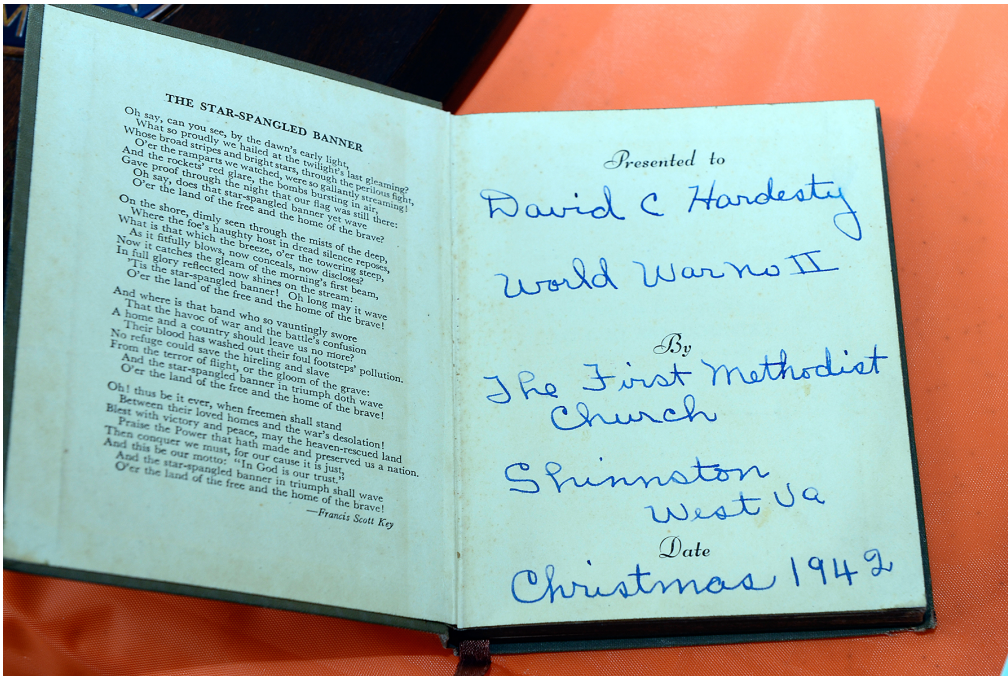


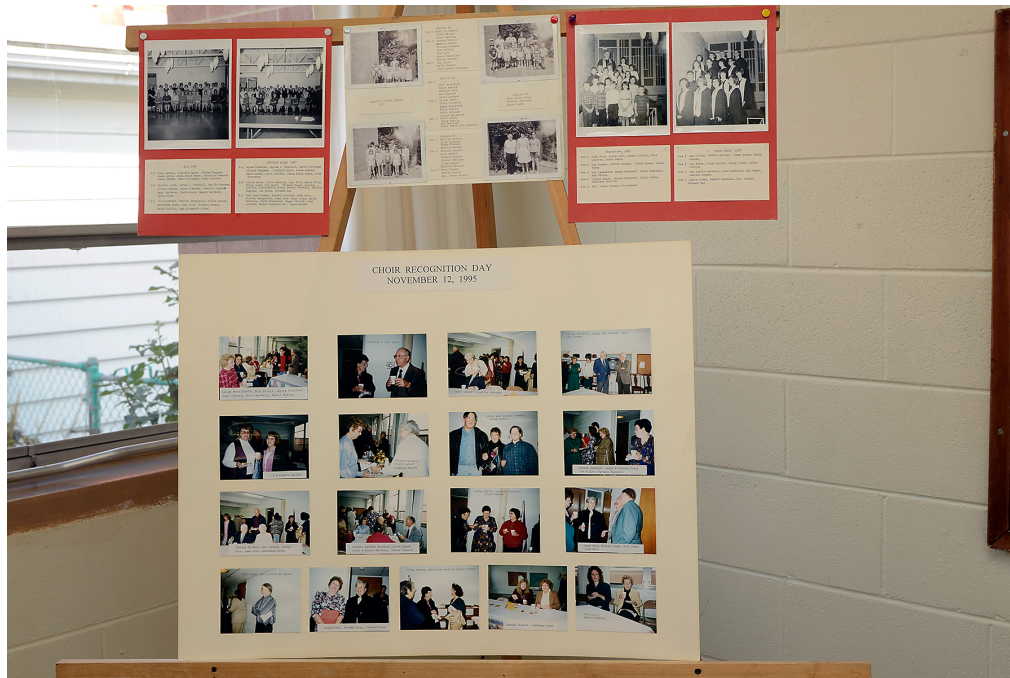














HISTORY OF THE BELL

The bell was purchased from Menelleys of West Troy, New York, in 1855. It was first placed in the belfry of the first church built by the Methodists in Shinnston. This church was located on upper Bridge Street where Dr. Powelson's parking lot is now located. In 1911 another church was built on the corner of Rebecca and Pike Street and the bell was moved there. When the present sanctuary was built in 1977 the bell was placed in the court yard where it is located today. The bell is now (in 2006) 151 years old. The last person to ring the bell was Edgar J. Harmer. This occurred after the old church was closed and just before the bell was taken down.

The well known writer Grandville Davidson Hall who wrote The Daughter of the Elm attended the church on Bridge Street and wrote that shortly after the church was built it was the scene of a supposedly supernatural occurrence. Henry Sullivan, the church sexton or caretaker, worked at one of the town's mills and was killed when his clothing caught in a machine. This happened at noon and at the same time the church bell rang once. Members of the church ran to the church only to find it locked and no one was there. They were certain that a supernatural occurrence had taken place.

ITEMS PLACED IN CORNERSTONE IN 1911

1. Lists of church membership and officers; Sunday School class members and teachers; Epworth League officers and programs.
2. Reminiscences of Mrs. M. J. Harmer, the oldest member of the church
3. Committees and constitution of the WV Inter-Church Federation
4. Copies of the Shinnston News and the West Virginia State Weekly, which featured Shinnston.
5. History of the city of Shinnston and officers in 1911 and a brochure published by the Shinnston Board of Trade
6. Bulletins and programs from Fairmont First Methodist Church, 1911 commencement program at WV Wesleyan College, and Morgantown District Ministerial and Layman's Association
7. Financial statement from the Farmers Bank of Shinnston and the First National Bank of Shinnston
8. Short history and officers of the Shinnston Baptist Church
9. Lists of officers from: IOOF Lodge, Shinnston Lodge #16 Ancient Order of United Workman, Daughter of the American Revolution, and membership list of St. John's Masonic Lodge
10. Miscellaneous items: Business card of contractor Charles A. Short; WCTU songs and programs; pennies dated 1854 and 1911. The 1854 penny was placed under the pulpit of the church in 1854 by the builder Bart Clark. It was removed by William J. S. Harmer when the building was being repaired and later placed in the 1911 Cornerstone.

ITEMS PLACED IN THE CORNERSTONE BOX ON OCTOBER 16, 1977

1. Picture of Miss Estelle Randall
2. Program of Consecration Service
3. History of the church
4. List of special gifts and their donors
5. Newspaper clipping about the special service for opening the cornerstone box
6. Shinnston News of October 13, 1977
7. Set of 1976 coins
8. All of the items from the first list (1911) were kept in the box

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SHINNSTON

This Church was first established in Shinnston in 1786 in the home of Jonathan Shinn, one of the founders of Shinnston. The town of Shinnston was settled in 1776. The first church building was built in 1835 and was located on lower Walnut Street. The lot on upper Bridge Street was purchased in 1854 and a new church building was erected. That building was used as a Church until 1911 when a lot at the corner of Rebecca and Pike Streets was purchased and a new church building was erected. That building was used for worship services until 1971 and then torn down for safety reasons. The Epworth Center building was used for worship services until this building was built and opened in 1977.

The First United Methodist Church of Shinnston has the distinction of being the oldest Methodist Church in Harrison County.

